

COUNCIL

25 JANUARY 2018

MOTION 4

Proposed by: Councillor Bernie Bowen - Thomson

Seconded by: Councillor Saeed Ebrahim

This Council notes that:

2.6 million women born in the 1950's have had significant pension changes imposed on them by the Pensions Acts of 1995 and 2011. Hundreds of thousands of women are suffering severe financial hardship as a result of how these changes were implemented and communicated.

WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) have been campaigning for the government to make 'fair transitional state pension arrangements' for women born in the 1950s. They have emphasised the hardship endured by many women as a result of these changes, particularly as many had little or no personal notification of the changes.

The Department for Work and Pensions has confirmed that it did not write to women affected by the 1995 Conservative Government's Pension Act until 14 years later, in 2009. However, these letters were sent to women born up to 5 April 1953 and subsequently halted in 2011 whilst further increases in state pension age were made by the Government. The DWP started writing to women born after 6th April 1953 in 2012, just 2 years before some were due their state pension.

These changes affect women in Cardiff. The number of women born in the 1950's affected by the Pensions Acts by constituency is estimated as follows:

Cardiff Central = 3,400 women
Cardiff North = 5,300 women
Cardiff West = 5,200 women
Cardiff South & Penarth = 5,800 women
(House of Commons Library Estimates, Jul 2017)

The change in the number of women aged 60+ years claiming Employment Support Allowance (ESA), universal credit or jobseekers allowance (UC or JSA) between Aug 2013 and Aug 2017 by constituency is as follows:

Cardiff Central = +440% (ESA) & +50% (UC/JSA)
Cardiff North = +440% (ESA) & +100% (UC/JSA)
Cardiff West = +430% (ESA) & +150% (UC/JSA)
Cardiff South & Penarth = +510% (ESA) & +100% (UC/JSA)

The percentage of women aged 60+ years needing to claim ESA or UC/JSA, between 2013 and 2017, has increased disproportionately compared to other age groups and compared to men. Pension age changes are a significant contributory factor to this increase.

The significant loss of income to women who were expecting their pensions at 60 will have an adverse effect on our local area. According to WASPI, some women are at risk of losing up to £45,000 as a result of not receiving their pension until they are 66 years of age. Women and families affected by these changes will have less disposable income. For some women, they are having to sell their homes, claiming housing support and/or finding they need to claim other benefits to survive. Not all women are able to continue working due to ill health, caring responsibilities for parents and/or grandchildren, redundancy, etc.

In response, this Council calls upon the Government to make fair transitional state pension arrangements for all women born on or after 6th April 1951, who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age (SPA) with lack of appropriate notification.

This Council further calls upon the Government to reconsider transitional arrangements for women born on or after 6th April 1951, so that women do not live in hardship due to pension changes they were not told about until it was too late to make alternative arrangements.

Cardiff Council also commits to supporting women affected by the sudden impact of these unfair transitional state pension arrangements by providing advice and information through the community Hubs and Libraries across Cardiff to help women access all benefits to which they are entitled.